

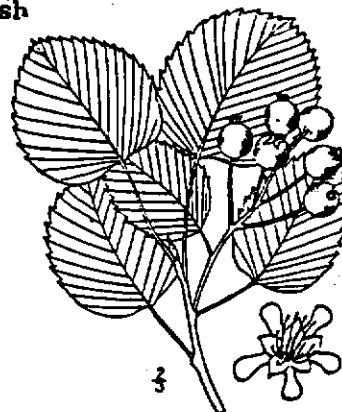
MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

NANTUCKET SHADBUSH

(Amelanchier nantucketensis Bickn.)

DESCRIPTION

Nantucket Shadbush is a leafy, much branched shrub, 2-5' (0.6-1.5m.) high. The bark of the younger parts is purplish and becomes grey. The dark green leaves are 0.5-1.2" (1.5-2.0cm.) wide and finely serrate except at the base. The upper side of the leaves has scattered hairs. The young leaves are tomentose (woolly) as is the ovary. It produces cream-colored flowers in May and early June and small, dark, blue-berries in July and August.



Britton, N.L. and S.A. Brown. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada. Dover Publications, Inc. 1970 reprint of 1913 ed.

SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Plants within the genus Amelanchier are difficult to distinguish and many species hybridize. Nantucket Shadbush can only be positively identified when flowering by its short, narrow and spatulate petals and its glabrous (smooth, not hairy) ovary. Thicket Shadbush (A. canadensis) occurs within the range of Nantucket Shadbush but grows 10-17' (3-5m.) tall. Running Shadbush (A. stolonifera) has longer and broader petals, the top of the ovary is densely hairy, and usually grows 1-3' (0.3-0.9m.) tall.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Nantucket Shadbush is characteristically found in dry, sandy habitats such as sand barren and sandplain grassland communities. In both of these community types it is usually found in low, dense colonies or small clumps in the dry, sandy soils of old fields, low thickets, and particularly along roadsides. It appears to be intolerant of shade, preferring sunny locations. It also favors periodic disturbance such as fire, cutting, and grazing which prevents shading out of this species by scrub oak and pitch pine. Nantucket Shadbush grows in association with Myrica pensylvanica (continued overleaf)



Distribution of Nantucket Shadbush



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

NANTUCKET SHADBUSH (continued)

(bayberry) and Gaylussacia baccata (black huckleberry).

RANGE

This species has an extremely limited range, so far only known from the Massachusetts islands and Long Island, New York.

POPULATION STATUS

Nantucket Shadbush is considered a species of "Special Concern" in Massachusetts. In the state, it is found only on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Currently (1978 to present), 38 populations have been vouchered; historically, 6 other populations have been reported. In addition, 2 populations were recently rediscovered on Long Island, New York. This Shadbush is rare because of its extremely limited range. Also, growth of vegetation resulting in increased shading of areas containing shadbush populations pose a continuing threat to this species.